

## **A Study of Voiceless Women Characters in the Novels of Kavita Kane**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

The paper focuses on analysing how the author uses myth to retell the same story from a feminist perspective, how these versions of ancient texts reinterpret the mythical past, and how her texts display a range of opposing attitudes toward the selected women characters and incidents in the Indian Myths. A myth is a subjective, intuitive, cultural, and religious truth. One day, a myth of today will become true. Literature favours some voices, ideas, and perspectives over others by nature. This is arguably even more true in the case of myths since we can more easily distinguish between expressed and buried voices. More generally, feminist politics interact with mythology. Feminism and mythology do not fit into the current world. A great number of cultures and civilizations were founded on myths. The cultural myths are said to represent ideas, ideals, and philosophies that advance the needs of the populace. Writers from all over the world are using their classic myths to address modern issues and reinterpreting the past in the context of the present. Throughout history, myths' mythological characters and themes have served as symbolic representations of many cultural preconceptions, values, and philosophies. As a result, myths are persistent and expanding in scope and significance. Rich ideas and storylines are how myths often shine. All ages of literary artists use these topics and forms in their works.

**Keywords:** ModernRetelling, Feminist Revisionist, Indian Culture,PopularFiction

### **Introduction**

Numerous well-known imaginary essayists currently retell stories from Indian fancies in a different style. There appears to be a surge in the number of books, films, and works of art that dissect selected characters and events in Hindu folklore, repeating and examining their current meanings. Retelling legends has a significant role in contemporary India. The legends and recurring patterns of the stories had a significant impact on the restoration of culture and the continuation of the Indian civilization as a whole.

The fictional landscape of India has undergone significant transformations in practically every element of life, especially in the twenty-first century. In point of fact, it has gone through a change in generational leadership. We have put away the borrowed colonial attire and now seek to learn more about our own roots, shadows, and cultural branches by reading about them and writing about them. This has undoubtedly revived the rich tradition of India's 'heroic age' and revolutionised Indian writing in English in order to familiarise Indian

readers with ancient Indian culture and history. Contemporary writers have recast indigenous Indian culture with a refreshing perspective by attributing scientific explanations to traditional cultural ethics.

The relevance of women in the community of Indian people has been growing in recent years. The religion of Hinduism is not an exception to this rule, and as one moves from the society of the Ancient times to the society of the Early Medieval periods, the degree of freedom that women experienced in the context of the family and Indian culture gradually decreases and becomes more pronounced. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact moment in history when this erosion first started, it is clear that it has been happening for quite some time. The Ancient Indian culture can be compared to each other in order to conduct an investigation into the shifting roles and responsibilities of women within the community. Kavita Kane began writing novels based on mythology after she discovered that she was more interested in the female mythical characters who received the least amount of honour and glory.

However, Kavita Kane stands out for a few of different reasons. First, since since the publication of her first book, "Karna's Wife: The Outcast Queen's," in 2013, her body of work has been comprised of revisionist novels. While works such as "The Great Indian Novel" by Shashi Tharoor, "The Indian Epics Retold" by R.K. Narayan, "Draupadi" by Mahasweta Devi, and "The Palace of Illusions" by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni have been successful in this genre, their achievements have been bolstered by widespread attention and acclaim. Kane takes a step forward and transforms herself into the "lady with a goal." She accomplishes this by narrating (or renarrating) the tales of mythological women who have been marginalised, misunderstood, misrepresented, and literally abused in their respective mythologies.

It helped to imagine an Indian culture with unique characteristics. As Nietzsche explained, fantasies "social institutions that protect the general public from discontinuity are filled in. In order to justify life as worthwhile despite its dark moments, it creates social relationships that bind people together." The legends continue to hold a unique place in famous fiction; made-up modern researchers have accepted a different contemporary perspective. There are creative interpretations, and the tales are dissected, examined, probed in hazy areas, and determined consequences are authenticated by discussions and exchanges between readers, academics, and scholars. The legends are reinterpreted in a way that makes them less authentic and more human. The more delicate human emotions are present in the heroes as well. Their conflicts and clashes might not always be motivated by nobler goals. The legends' narrative has altered as characters' all-inclusive journeys have been narrated from different points of view. These reveal the divine beings' human sides and enable readers to relate to them in novel ways. The stories and narratives are discussed and linked to current belief systems and issues while the characters are explored and investigated. A fantasy is an emotional, organic, social, and self-assured reality. One day, the present illusion will become reality.

The purpose of writing is to elevate particular voices, viewpoints, and points of view above those of others. Due to folklore, this is apparently much more true because it is more obvious how clearly enunciated and hushed voices differ from one another. Folklore is more thoroughly integrated into the legislative issues of women's emancipation. Women's rights and folklore are neither cutting edge topics. Whatever the case, if women's freedom is to succeed in the coming decades, it must be distinctive. What exact form will the distinction take is the question. The fate of women actually depends on how we move on with reclassifying and carrying out feminist activist goals. A type of women's activist revisionist folklore that focuses on an essential revisionist use of orientation symbolism to change culture and damage the

legacy that women receive is also attempted in contemporary retellings. According to Sita's sister's investigation into the Ramayana and Kavita Kane's wife of Karna: *The Disgraced Queen*. There aren't many examples of well-known writing that weaves feminist and women's activist revisionist themes into stories about legends. Attempts to undermine profound quality and the most reprehensible and lofty ideas, as well as to bring up important ethical questions from a modern perspective. spoken from the perspectives of the women in the traditional Indian stories' dreams. The goal is to reformulate the concepts from overstuffed male fiction. is an effort to retell the stories from the perspectives of the sagas' marginalised voices.

Indian history and culture among young Indian readers who were yearning for the western civilization and had almost forgotten their rich antique culture. For instance, Ashok Banker and Amish Tripathi combined dream mode with folklore. These journalists are modernising Indian dreams by carrying out these kinds of killings. This effort to update the fantasies in Indian fictional composition was led by Ashok Banker. In any event, he made an effort to emulate the first legendary stories in order to maintain consistency. However, Amish Tripathi has reduced the legendary tales to little more than dream fiction. With this traditional method of caring for folklore, Amish attempted another viewpoint and provided it with another viewpoint. By implication, they focused on accusing others of breaking continually altered social norms. Some examples include speaking inappropriately (Amba), going too far (Sita), being labelled as witches (Kaikeyi and Sathiyavati), being used as a tool (Madhavi), and so on.

In addition, it is always the stories of women that are passed down from generation to generation without being spoken about. These days, in India, there are a lot of writers who compose works based on Indian mythologies in the form of fictions. In particular, these writers focus on portraying the unsaid and marginalised women in Indian mythology. Draupadi is portrayed in the best-selling novel *The Palace of Illusions* by Chitra Banerjee Diwakaruni as an influential, powerful, and independent woman. This is in contrast to the portrayal of Draupadi in the novels written by Kavita Kane and Chitra Banerjee Diwakaruni. She demonstrates to us that the Panchali's life is a series of decisions that she has made, and not those that other people have made for her, which grants her the right to be heard in the predominantly patriarchal society. Diwakaruni's comprehension of the epic endows it with a complete narrative, sometimes retelling and representing the original epic, giving a stronger role to the women of the story, and portraying them as equal in the society.

In her work "*Kaunteyas*," which Madhavi S. Mahadevan titled after their mother Kunti, she mentions their mother. The authors were revising traditional and wholly patriarchal myths in an effort to present readers with feminist alternatives to the traditional narratives. It portrays the stories of motherhood and womanhood and celebrates the divinity of the feminine, which can be found across its pages, and the female-centered community tends to romanticise it. These novels are a sort of "revisionist fiction," which challenges patriarchal perspectives and portrays the re-imagined stories in the voices and experiences of women who have been mostly disregarded by the narratives. Specifically, these novels focus on the experiences of women who have been marginalised. One of the strategies that feminist writers employ in order to rediscover previously published works is called revisionism. In order to obtain public acknowledgement for the right to own and determine that history, it is necessary to first construct a sense of history. Women were subjected to virtually entirely masculine proclamations when the myths were being spread. Women were portrayed as frail entities and weak creations that were easily fooled in early history. This perception persisted for a long time. In order to dismantle the patriarchal structure that exists within the society, post-feminism was developed.

### ***Female Struggles in the Past and Present***

The problems that have always been encountered by women can be traced back to prehistoric times. When compared to more recent times, the situation of women in ancient India was far more advantageous than it is today. During the Rig Vedic period, which lasted from 2000 BC to 1500 BC and was dominated by the Aryan civilization, women had a great deal of personal autonomy. On the other hand, one cannot assert with absolute certainty that the women living in Ancient India were totally liberated from the patriarchal dominance of the society. Despite the fact that they had a taste of independence in school, marriage, and other areas of their lives, women had suffered greatly for their existence.

When the later Vedic period, which lasts from 1500 BC to 800 BC, is examined in greater detail, one discovers that the status of women started to decline gradually about this time period. P. Thomas asserts in his book "Indian Women through the Ages" that during the later Vedic period, people had the belief that only sons were able to save their parents from hell, and that daughters were unable to carry out this kind of spiritual deed. Sons were the only ones who could perform this spiritual act. This misconception led to the devaluation of mothers who bore only children. During the Post-Vedic period as well, the status of women continued to deteriorate, reaching an even worse level. The subjugation of Indian women, which continues to exist at higher levels of society and was caused by, among other things, foreign invasions of India, a fervent belief in religious traditions, and other factors. Nevertheless, throughout the Post-Vedic Period, the people were encouraged to increase the position of women by Lord Buddha and the principles that he preached. In the annals of Indian history, the darkest age corresponds to the period beginning with the decline of Buddhism and ending with the arrival of Islam in India. At this time, later Puranas and Dharma Shastras were being written down. During this time period, the girls were required to get married before they started menstruating, and remarriage for widows was not permitted under any circumstances.

### ***Female Education***

Women who have received an education are of critical importance in the developing countries. A woman needs to have the ability to confront the many challenges that life throws at her with bravery. In contrast to men, women are not permitted to pursue education for its own sake unless it serves a certain function in society. There are limitations placed on the things that women can attempt to do. When they are faced with a decision on what they should do next in their lives, their opinion is not the one that is taken into consideration. Women are denied the opportunity to realise the innate abilities and potential that they possess. Women make up a larger percentage of the population who are illiterate or otherwise poorly educated than males do. This evil culture is rapidly expanding across undeveloped civilization, particularly in rural areas, and it is spreading like wildfire. It is necessary to educate women, not only so that they can obtain occupations that are healthier and settle down in life, but also so that the death rate, domestic violence, dowry torture, and other forms of violence against women can be decreased. Because of the country's appreciation for conservative traditionalism, the position of women in India is lesser when compared to that of men.

Forest universities were common in ancient India because a comprehensive education consisted of learning from one's surroundings under the guidance of a guru. In the book Ahalya's Awakening, Ahalya and her brother were both students at the Vashisht ashrama, where they received an education in ancient Indian traditions. Ahalya shown very early evidence of having an exceptionally high intelligence level and was a very quick learner. She longed to live in the ashram, but instead she was only given the opportunity to be married. She was not permitted to move there. No amount of pleading on her part could persuade her mother to reconsider her choice. However, because the kingdom was going to be besieged, there was

no other choice than to send Ahalya to the ashram of Rishi Gautam. After completing her time there, she was eventually married off to him in spite of all the challenges they faced. Even after she got married, Ahalya maintained her unwavering dedication to education. Throughout her life, both in the kingdom and at the ashram, Ahalya demonstrates that she is a lady who is unrelenting in her pursuit of the education that she so deeply values. On the other hand, it is clear that Satyavati did not have a formal education, both as a woman and as the daughter of a fisherman; yet, she did receive instruction that enabled her to become skilled in steering the boat with her strong and sinewy arms. Her intellect is demonstrated by the fact that she is able to use her skills in an effective manner. Later on, when she arrived at the palace of Hastinapur after marrying King Shnatanu, she was guided by Kripi, the daughter of a Rishi, who instructed her about the rituals and trained her with all of the qualities that a queen should exude. Kripi also trained her with all of the qualities that a queen should exude. Satyavati has always displayed a resolute demeanour toward whatever decisions she had to make. Bhishm was once informed by Kripi about Satyavati's smarts and intelligence, and Kripi advised Bhishm that she should not teach Satyavati any further information because one day, Satyavati could use all of the information that she had acquired against her and the people of Hastinapur, including the king and Bhishm. Satyavati is sacred.

"Women have long been viewed as less valuable. However, novelist Kavita Kane realised the harshness of the superficial world as it sought to instil a bad attitude in her. But she demonstrated that no one can humiliate her in the guise of spousal reprimand. It's strange how King Vahusha reacted to her bravery or fortitude. My Uruvi, who is a lioness, would not have barricaded herself inside her house to avoid the cruel comments and this purposefully frigid treatment.

### ***Women's Social Exclusion***

Social exclusion is an existential issue for women everywhere. Women's development research suggests that as the years go by, we may notice remarkable advancement. Even so, some communities exclude women from participating in economic, social, and political life due to the pervasive and entrenched social underpinnings of cultural inequality. Around the world, social exclusion has an impact on many communities of women. Without the support of society, a woman cannot create and advance the world. Women should be allowed to participate in both formal and informal economic events. Women experience stepped-in lack of access to education and enough income, which implies emotional and financial subordination, rather than a deliberate targeted propagandist onslaught. In such situations, women's sense of dignity is at risk, and this issue has been a longtime hindrance to female emancipation.

It is cruel to label a woman based on her gender and to cause her to suffer because of it. This burden of social isolation falls disproportionately on women. Women are not permitted to make decisions or take part in decision-making, have access to a good education, present their arguments, proposals, or other ideas, etc. Ahalya, a character in Kavita Kane's work, is used to illustrate the author's point on the social exclusion of women. She was forbidden from learning the details of a number of events that were taking place within the family and even within herself. She was, both consciously and unknowingly, cut off from social interaction by her family. Everyone gave up on Ahalya since they regarded her as nothing more than an object. When compared to the character Satyavati from the book "The Fisher Queens Dynasty," who did not even have the right to know who she was or that she was the daughter of a king and was treated in a manner that made her feel like an outsider in her own life, she was experiencing feelings of alienation in her own life. The fact that her father, King Uparichar Vasu, had deserted her when she was a baby and that this reality was only revealed to her by Dashraj after a significant amount of time demonstrates the rejection of a woman's birth right. Satyavati, the

daughter of a fisher chieftain, is forced to turn to marriage as a method to climb the social ladder in order to restrain her ambitions. In a similar fashion, the princesses of Kasi, Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika, have been kidnapped so that political scores might be settled. The ability of the women in the royal families to have children who will succeed to the throne is once again being evaluated. Women are not only alienated from their social reality as a result of the reduction of their identities to their bodies and the debasement of their characters, but they also become spectators to their own lives. In our nation, it is imperative that women be given the power to empower themselves. A society must not view women only as commodities to be exploited in any way. Altering the way a society views women is the change that needs to take place; until then, individual women will have to battle for their rights until they are satisfied. Ahalya has pushed back against the conservative customs, and despite the fact that she was aware that society was against her, she did not waver from the decisions she made.

Urivi, a character that is marginalised and a feminist, has been played by Kavita Kane in the end of the story extremely well. She provided the reader with a fresh viewpoint. Women are the very definition of sacrifice, and timely she has demonstrated that concept through the actions that she has taken. No matter what the circumstances are, she always puts the needs of her family first, just like Uruvi, who constantly thinks about her husband and has become her voice in a variety of different ways. She is always fulfilling multiple roles throughout her life, including that of daughter, wife, daughter in law, and mother. She gave her absolute best performance in each and every one of these roles. Women have never ever depended on males in any time period, but because she respects the concepts and conventions of society, she remained mute about the injustice that she experienced. Women hold the power to make the world a better place. This is the woman who has become her husband's success factor by continually supporting him in his endeavours and acting as a shadow for him. Despite this, some male-dominated societies ignored the reality of the situation. The "Ardhnareshvar" task is always performed by the women.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, when reading Kavita Kane, it is essential not to deviate and be blindfolded by the very vices that the author herself is attempting to purge us from, namely being judgmental. Kavita Kane is trying to purge us from these vices, so it is necessary not to stray. This would be counterproductive since, unlike women, patriarchal oppression may affect men and children in addition to women. Therefore, Kane is fighting against the oppression of women and girls through Satyavati and Ahalya by raising awareness, which is unquestionably a necessary prerequisite for the growth and propagation of feminist philosophy. An examination of some of Kavita Kane's female characters reveals that even though they all existed in societies that were predominately dominated by men, these women never fully gratified the needs and wishes of the men in their lives.

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